



# News Release

**For immediate release:** January 9, 2014

(14-002)

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## **New Year brings new screening to help protect Washington babies**

*State health officials will now check for “bubble boy disease” in newborns*

**OLYMPIA** —New testing that began with the New Year will better protect newborns in Washington from the disorder known as severe combined immunodeficiency, or SCID.

The new test is for one of 28 diseases screened for by the Department of Health Newborn Screening Program. It’s estimated that one or two babies with SCID will be born each year in Washington. Six to seven babies each year will be identified with other serious immune system disorders and will benefit from early detection and treatment as a result of the added test.

Commonly known as the “bubble boy disease,” early detection of SCID through newborn screening allows infants to receive bone marrow transplants or gene therapy before damage is caused by the disorder. Without treatment, a child with this disease is vulnerable to life-threatening infections during their first years of life.

Annually, more than 86,000 babies are screened for congenital disorders by the Office of Newborn Screening. These are conditions that, when identified early, can be successfully treated to allow the baby to live a longer, healthier life. If left undiagnosed, these disorders can cause severe disability or even death.

During its October 2013 meeting the state Board of Health recommended including this test in the series of newborn screenings done at the Department of Health’s Public Health Laboratories.

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